

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 25 and 47 are canceled. Claims 24, 28 and 46 are amended. Claims 26 and 27 remain as originally filed. Claims 1-23 and 29-45 were previously canceled by the Preliminary Amendment filed September 10, 2003. As a result, claims 24, 26-28 and 46 are pending in the application. Claim 24 is amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 25. Allowable claim 28 is rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 24. Claim 46 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 28.

Response to Arguments

Pursuant to paragraph 1 of the above-identified Office Action, the objection of claims 24-28 set forth in the prior Office Action has been withdrawn.

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the rejection of claims 24, 26, 27, 46 and 47 has been maintained.

Claim Objections

Pursuant to paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claim 25 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 28 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

Pursuant to paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Office Action, claims 24, 26, 27, 46 and 47 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent Number 6,234,683 (Waldron et al.). The Examiner asserts that Waldron et al. discloses in Figure 15 a fiber optic plug and receptacle assembly comprising a plug body, a fiber optic connector disposed within the plug body, and a fiber optic receptacle for mating with the fiber optic plug, wherein the fiber optic receptacle comprises an adapter sleeve disposed within the internal cavity defined by the

receptacle housing, the adapter sleeve defining a lengthwise extending passage for receiving a portion of the plug ferrule of the fiber optic plug, and wherein the shroud and the adapter sleeve are sized such that portions of the adapter sleeve are disposed within the at least one opening defined by the shroud once the plug ferrule of the fiber optic plug is inserted into the adapter sleeve. See Office Action at pages 3-4.

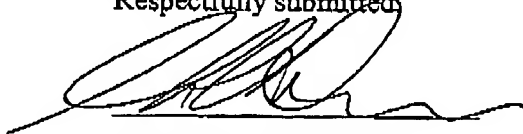
Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection as applied to amended claims 24, 28 and 46. Base claim 24 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 25. Thus, claim 24 is patentable. Allowable claim 28 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 24 (as originally presented). Claim 46 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 28, which the Examiner has indicated is allowable. Claims 26 and 27 depend directly from patentable base claim 24, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Claim 47 is canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 24, 26, 27, 46 and 47 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e).

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and these remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objections to claims 25 and 28 and the rejection to claims 24, 26, 27, 46 and 47, and to reconsider the application. This Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action and places the application in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowability for the pending claims 24, 26-28 and 46. Applicants encourage the Examiner to contact the undersigned directly to further the prosecution of any remaining issues, and thereby expedite allowance of the application.

This Amendment does not result in any more independent (3) or total claims (5) than paid for previously. Accordingly, **no fee for excess claims is believed to be due.** The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any other fee due in connection with the filing of this response, including any excess claims fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 not already accounted for, such an extension is requested and the fee should likewise be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher C. Dremann
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 36,504
P. O. Box 489
Hickory, N. C. 28603
Telephone: 828/901-5904
Facsimile: 828/901-5206

Dated: December 8, 2004